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**The  
Intermediate  
Department**

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**EUGENE C. FOSTER**

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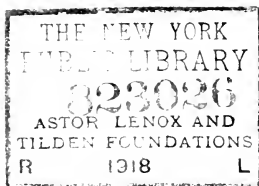
AUTHOR OF "THE BOY AND THE CHURCH," "STARTING TO  
TEACH," ETC.



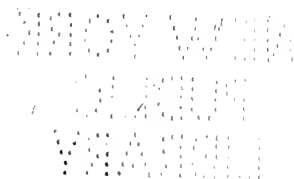
PHILADELPHIA, PA.  
THE WESTMINSTER PRESS

1917

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## The Intermediate Boy

“Entering the years of mystery,” some one has characterized the beginning of the period when the boy emerges into early adolescence. It is a good phrase; they are years of mystery, and only that, for the boy, for it is a new way to him, full of new sensations; years of mystery, too, for many of his elders, for they have failed to become acquainted with the significance of the period.

Somewhere between childhood and manhood the boy must pass over the bridge which separates the two. Granted that this transition period covers all the years from twelve to twenty-four, it yet remains that the span of the bridge is more clearly discerned in the years from twelve to fifteen. We may call this period early adolescence, the years immediately following, to twenty, middle adolescence, and the years beyond, to twenty-four, later adolescence. But the scientific terms need amplification in the light of the problems of the Intermediate teacher.

What factors, then, enter into the task which this teacher assumes when he faces a class of boys of twelve, thirteen, or fourteen?

In the first place, it is usually well to group boys of twelve, thirteen, and fourteen together and those of fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen together. The first

division point is well made at the end of the ninth grade, or at the average age of fourteen. We do well to learn from educators who are placing the division between the junior and senior high schools at this point. Many a real difficulty in dealing with boys in the Sunday school would be partially solved by recourse to this grouping. The earlier group is marked by a lingering of the individual traits, as shown in play; the second group begins strongly to develop the social elements, as indicated by team play. The earlier group is distinctly in the hero-worshipping stage; in the latter group the appeal of abstract ideals is beginning to be felt.

The years from the twelfth birthday until the end of the fourteenth year may be taken as a whole for the purposes of department grading. They are marked by certain well-defined characteristics, and these may be properly grouped under four familiar heads:

1. *Physical*.—The boy grows rapidly; the long bones sometimes develop more rapidly than the muscles, giving rise to awkwardness. The brain reaches its full size at about fifteen years. Changes in sex life take place, and the boy becomes a potential father. Sex temptations enter more definitely, and, if yielded to, marked physical evidences are present.

If healthy, the boy is full of energy. It is not the restless, purposeless energy of earlier years, but it shapes itself to the accomplishment of things. If undirected, it may become mischief or flagrant wrongdoing; if directed, it may accomplish almost unbelievable things in the right direction.

2. *Mental*.—The physical changes above referred to, unless the boy is guided through them, may result in practices that produce mental lassitude and apparent dullness. Normally, the boy is full of curiosity and desire to learn. He is, if properly led, constructive. He can make things endlessly; but his tastes in this direction may shift with the wind or may be fairly continuous.

3. *Social*.—He passes through the stage of hero worship to the beginning of the stage of ideal worship. He is group-minded—first, with selfish motives, and later with motives dominated by the welfare of the group. Therefore he is a member of a group or gang. If he yields seriously to his physical temptations, he may have a tendency to be alone and live apart from the crowd. Usually this is not a good sign; but occasionally a boy is found in whom this is but a trait of character, rather than an indication of habit. The teacher should be slow but sure to reach some conclusion.

4. *Spiritual*.—The period marks the time of natural choice of good or evil, with many tendencies urging on the selection of the good. In brief space this tremendous subject may not be even fairly discussed. But the conclusion of much study may be stated in a few words. It is the harvest time for a spiritual decision; coincident with the physical awakening we find the spiritual awakening. The call to follow Jesus Christ is a loud one, and is heard eagerly. Some time Christian leaders will truly awaken to the significance of this, and when

they do they will fall on their faces in penitence for their past failure to lead the boy out into spiritual high places at the time when he was most eager to go.

Out of this partial study of the characteristics of this period, what practical working suggestions may be gathered? Later chapters will develop these in detail; let us here, however, state a few principles.

1. The boy in this period should, preferably, be under a man teacher. At no other period, either before or after this, is it quite so important. True, the woman may be able to teach as well as a man, and frequently better. But the needed personal contacts with the boy's life are beyond the woman's power. He needs now one who knows what he is going through; and only a man can know. Not every man remembers sympathetically, and by that same sign he may not be an acceptable friend to the boy at this time. More than a teacher the boy needs a man friend; if to his friendliness this man adds all that is good as a teacher, the combination is excellent. Needless to say, this man must himself be pure in thought, word, and deed.

2. Early in the period the lesson material should center around biography; later, great abstract ideals should be introduced. As the period develops the lessons taught should be accompanied by new avenues of expression which are opened up before the boy. The abstract truth must be lived out in concrete ways. This is of tremendous importance.

3. His attachment to the right kind of teacher must not be lightly regarded, and should never be lightly

spoken of. Woe be to the influence of that teacher who values this attachment lightly! Even greater is the tragedy if the boy discovers his teacher to be unworthy of his trust. The teacher who wins his admiration and affection and then triflingly discharges his duty as a teacher, being irregular or indifferent, for instance, is assuming an appalling responsibility in the character processes of the boy's life.

4. He must be treated as a whole boy, not as a boy with a Sunday section and a week-day section, not as one with a physical compartment and a spiritual compartment. The Church which is willing to relegate to some other agency the interests of his physical life and his social life while it holds to itself the interests of his religious life, thereby detaches him from its influence, and not infrequently blames some other agency for taking him away. Better by far that the Church prove to him its whole-souled interest in everything he is interested in—he must be treated as a whole boy, not as a sectional boy.

5. He resents being classed with children. Happy the teacher who recognizes a tragedy in a boy's life and has sense enough not to treat it as a comedy. He is emerging into manhood; this is no trifling thing. To class him as a child is stupid; to class him as a man is equally so. Lack of teachers in small schools seems to force a lack of proper grading, and superintendents sometimes justify themselves on this score for placing thirteen-year-old boys in men's classes. Careful observation proves that in nearly every case a better dis-

tribution of teaching material will avoid these seeming necessities.

#### **For Further Reading**

- BURR.—“Studies in Adolescent Boyhood.”  
MOORE.—“The Contents of the Boy.”  
GIBSON.—“Boyology.”  
FOSTER.—“The Boy and the Church.”  
FISKE.—“Boy Life and Self-Government.”  
ROBINSON.—“The Wage-Earning Boy.”  
HALL.—“From Youth Into Manhood.” (A study of sex life.)

#### **Questions for Review**

1. What is meant by “adolescence”?
2. What is the entire range, in years, of the adolescent period?
3. State briefly the physical characteristics of the Intermediate boy.
4. Define “mischief” in terms of “energy.”
5. Suggest two characteristics of this period in the mental realm.
6. Trace the social changes in the twelve to fifteen year period.
7. What special responsibilities rest upon the teacher with regard to the boy’s spiritual life?
8. Why is a man teacher desirable at this time?
9. How may the Church express an interest in the whole boy?
10. Why is proper grading especially important here?

## II

### **The Intermediate Girl**

The twelfth birthday marks, in a general way, the door by which the girl passes from the realm of childhood into girlhood and, later, into womanhood. It is true that there is no sharp line here, but the entrance into the thirteenth year is so full of significance in the life of many girls as to make it a marked year in our study and grading.

Physically, the girl in the Intermediate grade of the Sunday school is passing through a time which greatly disturbs her. She is functioning physiologically in a way that betokens potential motherhood, and this means in many cases a physical upheaval that greatly affects her. This functional disturbance is physical, but its effects are mental, social, and even spiritual.

It is of the utmost importance that the girl in this period shall be well nourished, get sufficient sleep and exercise, and in other ways be given opportunity for the best development of her body. Carelessness here may result in lifelong disability. And yet what carelessness there is—not only in homes which lack comforts because of economic stress, be it fully understood; for in homes where money is sufficient, or even plentiful, the girl of the early teens is allowed to choose her food or overeat to her detriment; and social customs rob

her of her rightful rest and an atmosphere of wholesome interests.

In the years between twelve and fifteen the girl takes particular care to be physically attractive. Dress becomes prominent in the thought; a hundred feminine touches deftly brighten her appearance and add to her charm. Where this is rightly guided by the wise mother, these efforts may be all in good taste; without guidance, the results may be in poor taste and decidedly contrary in result to that which is intended. If home helpfulness is lacking here, the Sunday-school teacher may be of great help, but she must be very tactful, for the girl is extremely sensitive.

Mentally, this girl of the "new birth," as adolescence suggests, will usually be keen and alert. She will seem to outshine boys of like age. She may be no keener mentally than the boy, but her sense of shame at failure may be greater; hence she is likely to exert herself more in her studies.

She is a dreamer. These three years will usually be crowded with fancies. Normally they are wholesome fancies and dreams of helpfulness and service. If they are less than this, an abnormal condition of mind must be suspected.

She is beginning to think for herself. Her period of doubting may not come in full force till the Senior grade, but there are evidences of its beginning now. The teacher may deal with the evidences of this questioning period wisely, and steady her for the days to come; or she may silence her, drive her questionings



inward for further development and unrest, and help to bring her to her time of questioning in a rebellious and stubborn mood.

This girl will usually have an insatiable appetite for reading. What shall she read? Often library shelves offer to her modern books of the "problem" variety which are unwholesome in the last degree; many of them would be anything but helpful to her mother. Sometimes a wise teacher at school or a librarian may guide her aright; sometimes parents are helpfully watchful of what the daughter reads. But what of the great numbers of girls who have none of these safeguards? Their book friendships are but a degree less potential than their personal friendships; indeed, they may be more potential than personal contacts. Here the Sunday-school teacher may be of great help.

Socially, this girl is just blossoming out into the time of the sweetest or direst of possibilities. She is social-minded now; if she is not, she is not herself. Her social life needs guidance. Some girls will get such guidance at home. Is it but a fancy that they are getting it less at home than they did formerly, or is it true? Others will have little guidance from anywhere. To these may come the early conviction that the social conventions are to be despised and forgotten. Poor, needy girls! Who shall help them?

Personal friendships, chumships between girls, will count mightily for good or ill. To many a Sunday-school teacher these newly formed and frequently quickly formed friendships or attachments are sources

of the deepest anxiety, and the problem of how to meet the situations which arise seems hardly capable of solution. One thing should be remembered: To criticize the girl's new friend may be the surest way to deepen the attachment. It is worth all the time it costs to help a girl to find friends who will help and not hinder her.

Here enters the whole question of amusements. Shall we catalogue them and say this is wrong and this is right? Who would feel competent to prepare such a catalogue? Have we made mistakes in trying to do this? Is it not better to teach principles to the girls themselves? They will need guidance from older persons in making these applications; if we make decisions for them, however, when will they learn to decide safely for themselves?

In the spiritual realm this Intermediate girl is usually ready for all that the best interpretation of Christianity can bring to her. She is eager for participation in a program of helpfulness; she is responsive to the program of world helpfulness which Christ stands for; she is deeply touched by his sacrifice. The way is ordinarily open for her sincere acceptance of Christ as her personal Saviour, and, if not hindered by home or other influences, she will normally respond to the invitation to join the Church. If these years fail to keep her steady in her Church affiliation and interests, she may be most difficult to reach later.

Summarizing, then, we find the girl in her early teens a winsome, wholesome, happy, dreamy person, seemingly superficial often. but in reality stirred by the very

depths of feeling, intense in her friendships and dislikes, which are not infrequently directed toward the same object in rapidly shifting periods. She is a puzzle, indeed, to one who fails to live in full and sympathetic understanding of her, but a source of never-ending encouragement and helpfulness to the woman who remembers what it was to be a girl herself and who sees through these troublous years to the later ones of quiet and of poise.

No more disquieting thing can come between teacher and pupil in this period than lack of confidence. If only a lack, it is costly enough; when it grows to a place where deception is practiced it is serious indeed. It is not possible here to enumerate the problems which come to the teacher of girls of this age. There is one solution of universal application. If the teacher be right-minded herself, spiritually in touch with the purposes of Christ, and can maintain at all times a relationship of wholesome confidence, the problem is readily solved. The girl will respond to this call for confidential relationship; whether it shall be established or not depends more upon the sincerity, sympathy, and resourcefulness of the teacher than upon the girl, and it is worth all it costs.

In the light of this study can there be the slightest doubt about the necessity for a woman teacher at this stage of the girl's experience? Can any seeming expediency justify a man's being charged with the delicate tasks of these character-forming days? Is it even possible for a man to enter sympathetically into the

real problems of these girls? Certainly there seems to be but one answer to these questions. Girls in this grade and the Senior grade to follow should by all means be under the care of women teachers.

#### For Further Reading

For fuller discussion of topics, such as "amusements" and the "boy-crazy stage," see "Problems of Intermediate and Senior Teachers," by the same author, to be published by Westminster Press.

SLATTERY.—"The Girl in Her Teens."

MOXCEY.—"Girlhood and Character."

SLATTERY.—"The Girl and Her Religion."

McKEEVER.—"Training the Girl to Help at Home."

HOOD.—"For Girls and the Mothers of Girls."

#### Questions for Review

1. What functional changes occur in this period?
2. What care is necessary that the girl's physical and mental health shall be safeguarded?
3. What is the girl's interest in dress and how is this explained?
4. How is this period distinguished in mental activities?
5. Are fancies and daydreams helpful or hurtful?
6. How should a questioning attitude in the matter of religious belief be dealt with?
7. How may the girl's reading be directed?
8. What are the dangers in new-formed attractions between (a) girls; (b) girls and boys; (c) girls and women?
9. What is the normal response of the girl to the call of Christ and the Church?
10. Why should a woman, rather than a man, teach girls of this age?

### III

## What Is the Aim of the Department?

The aim of the Bible school as a whole is clear enough. Why specially consider the aim of a department of the school?

The answer is readily found. There are aims within aims. The immediate aims of the Intermediate Department may be stepping-stones to the achievement of the ultimate aims of the Bible school as a whole.

For what shall the Intermediate teacher strive? Toward what shall the work of the department progress? What is the goal?

To answer, it is necessary to think back over the two preceding chapters, for therein is described the material with which we must work, the clay for molding. To answer, it is necessary to look ahead as well, to discern the shapes into which we would mold our clay. To answer, it is necessary to know the tools with which to work. On the farm a plow suggests a field to be deep furrowed, a threshing machine suggests a crop to be garnered and prepared for the mill.

Is the department aim to take the boys and girls who come from the Junior grade below and prepare them for the Senior grade beyond? Yes, in part. But that is not all. We must prepare them for the new character tests which come with new emotions and new ex-

periences; multiply their religious contacts; strengthen their hold on things spiritual; help to round out their lives.

These aims may be briefly summarized in the following paragraphs:

1. To secure a declaration of Christ's place in life as a personal Saviour. One may call this conversion, another decision, another acknowledgment. It is the oath of allegiance taken by the boy or the girl who joins the army of Jesus Christ. There is a chapter in the book on the question of how this may be done (see page 69). Here we have merely the statement of the necessity; it should be done. And these are the years in which it may be done most easily.

2. To secure definite, intelligent Church membership. Why is such a word as "intelligent" used here? Because much of our Church membership for boys and girls has been wholly lacking in this element. That the boy and the girl join the Church is important; that they join with understanding is more important. (See page 75.)

3. To open up channels of expression for the religious life. At this period a religious life which finds no definite expression will quickly dry up. It will be lifeless. How true this may be in all periods of life is not here a matter of discussion. But with the boys and girls of the Intermediate years expression is a necessity beyond question. Means of securing such expression will be discussed later.

4. To secure all-round development. The growth

must be in breadth as well as in height. "Life is measured by its length multiplied into its breadth." The interests of the boy and the girl are life-wide; the Church, through its Sunday school, must touch the boy and the girl in a way no less narrow than the interests themselves. In our aim there must be the elements which will meet all needs: Of the physical life, that it may be enriched and glorified; of the mental life, that it may be dedicated; of the social life, that it may be sweetened and made wholesome and unselfish; of the spiritual life, that it may permeate all the rest and find happiness in daily growth.

5. To establish an intimacy with the Bible; to make prayer habitual and genuine; to cultivate reverence till it shall be about us as the air we breathe; to plant seeds of honesty and industry and right ambition; to tend these seeds till they take root and give promise of flower and fruit.

#### **Questions for Review**

1. Why should personal decision for Christ be suggested as an aim of this department?

2. If a pupil has been raised in a Christian home and has always been consciously related to Christ, is public decision or acknowledgment necessary?

3. How would you define "intelligent" Church worship?

4. How early may a boy or girl join the Church intelligently?

5. Explain the statement, "There can be no impression without expression."

6. Why will a narrow interpretation of the Church's

interest be insufficient to hold the pupil of this age?

7. Why is expression a desirable adjunct of Church membership?

8. What are the needs of the physical, mental, social, and spiritual manifestations of life?

9. Summarize the aims of the Intermediate Department.

10. What are the results where these aims are not discovered?



## IV

### How Shall the Work Be Organized?

There is an unfortunate impression abroad that departmental organization is possible only in a large Bible school. The officer and teacher of the small school all too readily accept this idea, and fail to place their school on an effective working basis.

Departmental organization does not necessarily call for a separate room and a separate program. In fact, by far the larger number of schools will not achieve that degree of working efficiency. A few classes, in a general room, may, however, be organized as a department. But why should they be so organized?

The chapters on the boy and the girl give the answer to this question. Here we have age groups which cover certain well-defined characteristics. At approximately twelve years of age these young people fairly hasten their steps toward new manifestations of life. At fifteen, or thereabout, they step out into still another new world. Between these points we have fairly well-defined groups.

Group treatment is a necessity in recognition of the peculiar characteristics which appear. With boys there is a strong reaction in favor of the gang; with girls, in favor of the clique; later, the reaction changes toward the mixed group. For social purposes, for pur-

poses of service, for reasons of development, these young people should be in a definite departmental organization.

Here are some ways to secure organization:

1. The Intermediate Department, without special room or separate exercises, may be under a selected superintendent who is an associate or assistant superintendent of the school. Such a department may profitably have a special secretary who is assistant to the general secretary of the school. This would be desirable in even a small department if the secretary will take his task seriously and is not satisfied merely with marking records. A real secretary could greatly help a department of even three or four classes.

Such a department should have some special functions which mark the departmental division. As a department there could be participation in the public exercises of the school. Social events could be held on the department basis. Reports of attendance or giving could be made in a way that would show departmental entity.

If a department superintendent may not otherwise be secured, it may be feasible to let one of the teachers act also as superintendent. If the classes number four or more, however, there will be ample opportunity for a superintendent to invest time in departmental work.

2. Where the housing of the school permits, the department may find itself allotted a room for assembly and departmental exercises, the classes gathering, as in a general school, in small groups in one room for the lesson. The assembly feature, apart from other age

groups, either younger or older, is a feature well worth while.

3. A further step is possible where there is not only room for the assembly of the department, but where there is as well a separate room for each of the several classes. In this manner the Intermediate Department becomes almost a school in itself.

4. As a fourth possibility there is the division of the Intermediate pupils into two segregated groups—a boys' department and a girls' department. This segregation may be carried even later than the Intermediate Department.

Where this segregation exists for purposes of social and other activities outside of the school hour, still maintaining the assembly in common, there is much to be said in its favor. But carried to the extreme of complete segregation throughout the Intermediate period or later, it cannot be said to have proved many of the claims made for it. Although the plan has been widely proposed, it has not met with general adoption. In many cases where it has been tried it has later been abandoned. In other places it has been enthusiastically proclaimed a great success. Such a plan should be carefully scrutinized before adoption. It causes unnecessary confusion to try it for a while and then give it up. It calls for excellent leadership, and it is possible that this same leadership invested in the joint scheme would produce as good results as in the segregated schools. Certainly the smaller the school the more difficult it is to carry through this plan of segregation successfully.

But whatever the form of organization, certain principles are involved, a few of which should be here stated:

1. Organization is not an end in itself, but merely a means to an end. Organization, therefore, should make the real work of the school more practicable. It should facilitate grading and promoting, teaching and visiting; it should bring more prompt and more regular attendance, should provide social and other expressional activities; it should make easier the approach along the lines of the Christian challenge.

2. If the department, properly organized, becomes stronger than the school itself, or if departmental allegiance becomes greater than school allegiance, harm may be done. However popular may be the department, it should always be linked up to other departments, and the school as a whole should call for allegiance in every way.

3. Departmental organization should encourage class organization. In this period each class should have its own officers and committees, with teachers in the background, like good generals, directing "from the rear."

Care should be taken that the committees of the organized class cover two essential fields of effort: that which has to do with the class and its membership, and that which has to do with those outside the class. Selfish interpretation of what constitutes the real function of such a class has often a tombstone as its only evidence that once there was life. The altruistic must have its place, or the organized class will usually die.

Such an organized class should be registered with the

Sunday-school authorities of its denomination, and through such a registration should also find its place in the broad plan of interdenominational work.

The whole question of organization must be tested from the standpoint of practicability. The small rural school should not aim to organize just as the great city school is organized. Yet it should be as well organized as its more pretentious city neighbor. Whether an organization is effective or not is measured by the product. There are schools so organized that the running of the machinery takes up all the energy, and the product is consequently small. Proper organization will yield a greater product with less expenditure of energy than if the work were unorganized or poorly organized. Let that be the test.

#### **For Further Reading**

ALEXANDER.—“Teens and the Rural Sunday School.” Special leaflets issued by the Sunday School Board of your denomination.

Secondary Division, Leaflet No. 2, issued by the International Sunday School Association.

#### **Questions for Review**

1. What value is there in organizing the several Intermediate classes into a department?

2. What officers are essential to a departmental organization in a small school?

3. What advantage is there in a department's having an assembly of its own?

4. Make a statement in favor of the separation of the department into boys' and girls' departments; also a statement in opposition to this plan.

5. In what ways does better organization help the general school work?
6. What danger is present if the department fails to recognize its part in the entire school?
7. When is a class said to be "organized"?
8. What kinds of committees should an organized class have?
9. What is meant by a "registered" class?
10. What is the real test of effective organization?

## Who Shall Teach?

Do the qualifications of a teacher in the Intermediate Department differ from those required of teachers in other departments? In some ways they do. True, there are fundamental qualifications, such as preparation, sympathy, faithfulness, essential for all teachers; but even these take on additional significance in the relationship of the Intermediate teacher to the pupil.

As in no other period of the lives of the pupils the call here is for the man as a teacher of boys and the woman as a teacher of girls. The physical changes in boys and girls in the years from fourteen to sixteen, with their consequent new adjustments, call for the most sympathetic relationship between teacher and pupil. However close may be the ties that exist between the truly successful teacher and the young folk that constitute the class, there must be a barrier between the woman who teaches boys and the man who teaches girls. They cannot enter into the inner lives of their pupils at the point, frequently, of greatest need. Expediency sometimes pleads for this arrangement and tries to justify it; conviction must condemn it.

Besides the problems growing out of the changes in the physical life, there is the further basis for men with boys and women with girls in the fact that these are

the hero-worshipping years. It is not usually wholesome that a man should be the idol of early teen-age girls; nor is it conceivable that a woman should so function for boys. That a man may greatly influence the lives of girls and a woman profoundly impress boys in the right way is a matter of common observation. But the girl still needs her woman hero and the boy his man.

The Intermediate teacher needs a skill born of knowledge of the character-forming processes that are now at work, and with this a sincere sympathy with the boy or the girl in this difficult age. This statement will help to answer the question, What age is most desirable for teachers of Intermediate classes? It is not a matter of age in years. The physician says that a man is as old as his arteries; here we may say that a teacher is as old as his sympathies.

The eighteen-year-old boy has an advantage in the proximity of his interests to those of the Intermediate boy; his attitude toward the younger boy, however, may be unsympathetic, and his influence will be slight. On the other hand, the mature, or even aged, man may be removed from the boy by the span of one, or two, or three generations of life, but may still remember his own boyhood and be wholly sympathetic with the boyhood problems of his pupil.

Many a fine, winsome girl approaching the early twenties should have it within her power to captivate for all that is good the lives of girls in the twelve to fifteen year period; whether she shall do this or not will depend in large measure upon her ability to enter



into the joys and sorrows of these girls, to live with them their daily lives.

Sincerity is a prime requisite. Here, if anywhere, the precept and example must square. One's hero must not be a disappointment. The teacher stands for the incarnation of right principle and right living. But suppose the teacher preaches one thing and practices another!

The teacher must be one who realizes the value of the time-investment feature of the teacher's work. There must be time to prepare the lesson, and time to teach it, most assuredly. But there must be time as well to help the pupils to live it. Before twelve the child is normally home centered; after twelve there are widening areas of social contacts. As these increase the times of testing multiply. Will the teaching of father and mother, of friend and teacher hold? It is conceivable that the lesson hour may be so profitably spent that moral lessons may be rooted deeply enough to stand the stress when the storm comes. That is conceivable; but the probability is not sufficient to warrant confidence in such an outcome.

Here are the opportunities for investment in the leisure-hour occupations of these boys and girls. The school life or the work life may cover a third of the day; sleep calls for another third. The remaining third in most lives offers opportunity for some recreation or the cultivation of interests apart from the main channels of life. Where there are home duties, these also enter into this third. No teacher may hope to live any large

portion of this danger period with the pupils of the class; no teacher may confidently hope, however, to mold lives in the fullest measure without entering actively and sympathetically into this area of boyhood and girlhood interests.

How little time will suffice? That is not a fair question. How much time does it call for? is better. The teacher who cannot (or will not) give some time to the real life doings of boys or girls may well consider the whole question as to whether his or her field of teaching lies in this period or in some other where this factor is not so great an essential.

Must a man teacher for this period of boy life be athletic in his habits? Not necessarily. It is a point of contact worth while, provided other qualifications are also present. It is a good starting point. Lack of this qualification is not fatal, though lack of ability in certain well-defined lines may be well-nigh so. A man went to a camp of boys and demonstrated that he could not handle an ordinary rowboat; his influence was gone in that camp. No one would have required of him that he should prove his prowess in a racing shell, though he might have had this ability as an asset.

Must a woman be able to shine in either athletic or social customs? Shall failure to have achieved in either of these directions make her unacceptable as a teacher? Not necessarily so. The broader her interests, the more are her probable points of contact with the lives of the pupils. She must hold her own with the average. Added accomplishments may give added power to interest and to lead.

In short, then, the teacher, whether man or woman, must be dead in earnest, must ring true, and must sacrifice eagerly to win a right of way into the lives of the pupils. Perhaps that sums it all up. The strength for all that must be daily sought and gained from the Source of all strength. One who fails to do that surely fails to glean richly in this field of the ripened harvest.

#### For Further Reading

TRUMBULL.—“Teaching and Teachers.”

BRUMBAUGH.—“The Making of a Teacher.”

#### Questions for Review

1. What general qualifications are required of teachers in all grades?
2. Why should a man teach boys and a woman teach girls in the Intermediate Department, while women as teachers of both boys and girls are usually found in the Junior Department?
3. How does the hero-worshiping element affect the question of men teachers for boys and women for girls?
4. Explain the part that sympathy plays in a teacher's attitude.
5. How far does age determine the question of who shall teach? Give a reason for your answer.
6. How necessary do you consider athletic ability in a man and social achievement in a woman in order that they may be successful teachers? Why?
7. Why do broad interests make for better success than more limited ones?
8. “What you do makes so much noise I cannot hear what you say.” Explain this quotation in the light of a teacher's qualifications.
9. What is meant by “eager” sacrifice?
10. What is the one Source of strength for a teacher?

## What Shall Be Taught?

The lesson selection and its treatment for pupils of the Intermediate Department are matters of extreme importance. A skilled teacher may accomplish wonderful results with unsuitable lesson material, but that would hardly be an argument in favor of continuing the use of such lessons. Clearly the best lesson selection and the best lesson treatment to be had are to be eagerly sought by the teacher in this strategic age group.

For many years the Uniform Lessons suggested by the Lesson Committee of the International Sunday School Association occupied the major place in this field; and millions of people, on a given Sunday, studied the same lesson text. The treatment of this lesson text, however, was varied according to the age. Many schools still use this system for all grades and doubtless will continue to use it.

As attention became more and more focused on the educational task of the Sunday school, however, it became clear that lesson selection should be made with a view to the age characteristics and comprehension of the group. This conviction bore fruit in the Closely Graded Lessons, also selected by the Lesson Committee, now in part appointed by the International Sunday School Association, in part by the Sunday School Coun-

cil of Evangelical Denominations, and in part made up of representatives of denominations which hold membership in the Council.

The Closely Graded Lessons provide a grade for each of seventeen years from the first year of the Beginners to the last year of the Senior. These were eagerly adopted and are in wide use at the present time.

From the plan of one lesson for the entire school to one lesson for each year of school life was like the swing of the pendulum from one extreme to another. It is the natural trend in such an issue, and it has its distinct contribution to the cause of progress.

There are those, however, who believe that the pendulum has swung too far, and that somewhere between the two extremes is to be found a better solution of the problem. If the Uniform Lesson is lacking in pedagogical value, the Closely Graded Lessons are lacking in practicability, especially when the small, undermanned school tries to use them; besides, their very claim to special pedagogical value meets with partial defeat in the light of the differences between children of the same age, and even differences between children of the same public-school grading.

The better plan is that adopted by the Presbyterian Board of Publication in the arrangement known as the Departmental Graded Lessons. Coincident with the issue of this book there comes the announcement that these lessons are now available in all grades up to the end of the Intermediate Department. It is only necessary, therefore, to present these lessons at this point.

The Departmental Graded Lessons offer three years of work for the pupils of the Intermediate Department. Unlike the Closely Graded Lessons, these need not be taken in a fixed order. All the pupils of the department study one series of lessons this year, a second series next year, and a third series the following year. A pupil may enter the department at any time, remain for three years, and study all the courses assigned to this department.

The lesson selection conforms in large measure to that recommended by the Lesson Committee for the Closely Graded Lessons. Variations are made, however, at necessary points, and the three lesson courses for the Intermediate Department are not dependent upon a fixed sequence. Fundamental principles of psychology have controlled the selection. Thus biographical studies find a large place in this group, where they rightly belong. Whether they shall be taken in the thirteenth year of the child's life, age twelve, or the fifteenth year, age fourteen, is not so vital.

The practical advantages of the Departmental Graded Lessons are numerous. In a small department with but few teachers it is a great advantage to have the whole department studying one lesson instead of three. The question of the supply teacher is much simplified. The cost of lesson supplies is also a factor; a great saving results in not stocking so many courses at one time.

In short, all the advantages of the Closely Graded System, so far as they are applicable to Bible courses,

are present in the departmental graded plan; and many of the disadvantages are absent.

Three Year Cycle

TWELVE, THIRTEEN, AND FOURTEEN YEARS

FIRST UNIT

- I, II. The Gospel by Mark with Historical Introduction. Lessons 1-26.
- III. Studies in The Acts. Lessons 27-39.
- IV. The Bible, the Word of God. Lessons 40-52.

SECOND UNIT

- I. Biographical Studies in the Old Testament. Lessons 1-13.
- II. Things We Most Surely Believe. Lessons 14-26.
- III, IV. Biographical Studies in the Old Testament. Lessons 27-52.

THIRD UNIT

- I. Jesus the Leader of Men. Companions of Jesus and Early Christian Leaders. Lessons 1-13.
- II. Lessons in the Gospel by Luke. Lessons 14-26.
- III. Leadership for God. Bible Principles of Leadership. Lessons 27-39.
- IV. Story of the Reformed Churches. The Story of Our English Bible. Lessons 40-52.

Questions for Review

- 1. State the differences between the Uniform Lessons and the Closely Graded Lessons.
- 2. In what way have the Uniform Lessons failed to meet the needs of Intermediate pupils?

3. How do the Closely Graded Lessons aim to overcome the difficulty found in the Uniform Lessons?

4. What difficulties have been met with in the adoption of the Closely Graded Lessons?

5. What is meant by Departmental Graded Lessons?

6. Compare the plan of the Departmental Graded Lessons with (a) the Uniform Lessons and (b) the Closely Graded Lessons.

7. Without reference to the treatment of the matter in this chapter, state your own reasons for preferring any one of these systems to the other two.

8. How are fundamental principles of psychology recognized in the Departmental Graded Lessons?

9. Why are these lessons especially adapted to small Sunday schools?

10. As a matter of common interest, compute the cost for lesson helps for your school under each of the three systems and compare the results.



## VII

### The Privilege of Preparation

Many a lesson period is lost before the actual hour arrives. It is lost because the teacher comes to it consciously unprepared. There can be no enthusiasm when one enters a class of keen, Intermediate pupils in full appreciation of the fact that the preparation has been wholly inadequate.

What, then, constitutes adequate preparation? Is a half hour a week, as one teacher reports, enough? Or are twenty hours a week, as another testifies, still inadequate?

What is the best method of preparation? Is there a plan by which the time available may be used to best advantage?

The adequacy of preparation may not be measured in terms of hours. There are some elements which may be fairly enumerated as being fundamental. Given a selected Bible passage, a teacher would surely want to know something about the particular book from which it is taken; the context of the passage or its setting in the argument or in the story; the customs referred to, if any; the geography of the lesson, if it refers to localities; the characters of the lesson, if names are mentioned. So much may be referred to as "background."

But a teacher will need to press further in the course

of preparation to discover the essential teaching point of the passage. As lessons selected from the Bible are usually taught for their character-forming impressions, it is evident that ordinarily the lesson passage will yield material capable of being used for that purpose. Occasionally, doubtless, the passage may be chiefly of historical or geographical value.

But preparation with reference to the material to be taught is only a part of the process of getting ready. To know the pupils is essential; to know how to present the material to the pupils is equally so.

The work of getting to know the pupils should properly be a foundation for all other preparation, and should be added to as week by week the pupils become better known. A general knowledge of the Bible is likewise fundamental, and is not primarily a part of the weekly period of preparation. Knowledge of how to present the material to the pupil, and special study of a particular passage to be taught, are matters for weekly study.

Here is a practicable working plan used by one teacher; for purposes of illustration, a lesson on the life of Joseph is selected. Gen. 37: 1 to 40: 23.

*Sunday evening.*—A careful reading over of the lesson passage for the following Sunday, at least twice, with notation as to special preparation needed, such as the gathering of illustrations or illustrative objects. It may take several days to secure such pictures as "Joseph Telling His Dream," Tissot, and "Joseph Sold by His Brothers," Wilde.

*Monday.*—A reading of the passage from the standpoint of the pupil, to discover how it will look through his eyes and what message it should bear to him. Several possible messages may present themselves; by elimination the best will be selected. I find myself interested in the analysis of Joseph's character, but I am sure that my boys will find their first interest in the scenes of Joseph's boyhood, that wonderful coat, the tragic sale of the boy to the strange men of the caravan, and later incidents in which there are swift action and some real thrills. It is good for me to see this story through my boys' eyes. What message shall it bring to these boys? Among several I select this: "Here am I." Gen. 37: 13. Very few men learn how to respond to an assigned duty without question. God can use men who do respond as he used Joseph. Here Joseph obeyed his father; in his great temptation in Potiphar's house Joseph obeyed God speaking through his conscience. "The Lord was with Joseph."

*Tuesday.*—The working out of a lesson plan. This should be in outline only, to determine the method of opening up the class hour, the general procedure, and the method of closing the hour. For my lesson plan, very briefly stated, I make the following outline:

1. Approach.—How far have any of you boys been away from home alone? Give time for a few replies. How did you travel? Again a few replies. How would you like to be sent on a trip which would take six days of walking and camping out alone under the stars at night in a strange country? Some would be sure they

would like it. Well, that's the first picture we have of a certain boy named Joseph, seventeen years old. Setting of his story. Secure all graphic material obtainable.

2. Development.—The story in rapid review. A simple map of Palestine and Egypt. Life of a slave in an officer's house, including Joseph's probable duties (look up). Be ready to picture the movement of the caravan. Get opinions of boys as to good traits in Joseph's character. Show pictures of lesson places or customs.

3. Close.—Joseph had some hard tests. (a) Six days' journey alone, to find out how his brothers were, brothers who disliked him and did all they dared to show it. (b) To be sold into slavery and still keep up his courage and make good. Joseph secured a position of trust. (c) To be cast into prison for doing the right thing. Joseph still kept up his courage, and continued to do the right thing instead of the wrong one. (d) To be given place of great power and influence, and still do right, a harder test for some people than adversity. What did Joseph have that helped him make good? Trust in God; a fine sense of obedience. God hasn't changed; the need of the world hasn't changed; men like Joseph are still needed. Fellows like you may be the material out of which modern Josephs are made.<sup>1</sup>

*Wednesday.*—A more detailed study and arrangement of the lesson plan, making provision for special questions, illustrations, and applications. A note may

<sup>1</sup>My own lesson outline is expressed in a few lines. It is here elaborated to show its contents.

be written to a pupil giving special assignment for the following Sunday.

I work over above material to simplify and arrange it. I simplify my outline until I remember it clearly without notes. By letter I ask one boy to be able to draw an outline map of Palestine and Egypt on our blackboard next Sunday. By telephone I ask another boy to tell us what may be the causes of a famine.

*Thursday.*—A study of lesson material in textbooks and periodicals, getting the comments of others on the lesson passage and securing additional illustrations. Here I study at least two different treatments of the passage by lesson writers or commentators. I never read more than two unless I need to search further for an obscure point.

*Friday.*—A new study of the lesson plan, altering it where necessary in the light of Thursday's study, and shaping it finally for presentation on Sunday. My plan is richer now in "background," in material that I need as a teacher but may not use in my presentation; but the outline of the plan remains as it was.

*Saturday.*—No assigned task in preparation.

The above plan is based on an average of thirty minutes a day for six days. Where necessary, the study may be arranged for one or two periods instead of six. There is, however, an advantage in the daily arrangement.

It may be necessary to explain why the making of the lesson plan is suggested early in the week and the study of lesson helps later. The design of this is to prevent

the habit of lazily depending on another to do all the thinking. The African describes reading a book as "thinking with another man's head." Bible dictionaries and specially written historical books may well be studied early in the week. Bible commentaries and lesson helps in general may well be left until later in the week.

The above outline makes no provision for the broader study of the development of growing boys and girls, the study of the Bible as a whole, and the study of general teaching methods. Every teacher who seeks to be qualified should secure the best information obtainable from the Sunday-school headquarters of the denomination regarding teacher-training courses, and should enroll in a class or in a correspondence course.

But all has not yet been said about the privilege of preparation. There still remains for the Bible teacher the preparation which comes through prayer and meditation. The advantage of distributing the specialized preparation through six days lies partly in the fact that the intervening hours between study periods offer opportunity for the thoughtful consideration of what has been accumulated up to that time. This may be even more valuable than some of the specific study. The Bible bears a peculiar message. It is ever fresh. One has but to return to the same passage time after time and each time receive new light.

Shall the Holy Spirit guide in our preparation? If so, this preparation may not be hurried or superficial. To be much in prayer, to wait, to be willing to be only a

“voice,” these are among the most important elements in the privilege of preparation.

To the one who says, “I cannot get the time to prepare this way” there is but one reply. It is not conceivable that God has called you to be a teacher of a class of boys or girls in this period of delicate and important adjustments to new phases of life without at the same time making it possible for you to do that work well, and to be prepared adequately for the task he has set you.

If you are a teacher and do not get time to prepare properly, where does the responsibility rest?

#### For Further Reading

BROWN.—“How to Plan a Lesson.”

MARQUIS.—“Learning to Teach from the Master Teacher.”

MILLER.—“The Devotional Life of the Sunday School Teacher.”

#### Questions for Review

1. How does the lack of lesson preparation affect the enthusiasm of the teacher?

2. What is meant by the “background” of the lesson?

3. Besides the preparation of teaching material, what other elements of preparation are necessary for a teacher?

4. Why is a working plan, for study and presentation, desirable?

5. Outline and submit a plan for a lesson on “The Call of Samuel.”

6. Why should the reading of certain forms of lesson

helps come later rather than earlier in the week of study?

7. Why is it necessary to know something about boy and girl life in general, to be a prepared teacher?

8. Is it better to spend two or three hours at one sitting in preparation, or to divide this up into several periods? Why?

9. What advantage is there in coming back to a selected Bible passage a number of times?

10. What can be done for the teacher who does not have time for preparation?



## VIII

### The Golden Thirty Minutes

Thirty minutes for the lesson! This is the inalienable right of the Intermediate teacher.

Whether the session is an hour or an hour and a half, the teaching period for this age should be a full half hour. Less time for the actual teaching period will suffice in the Junior Department, but the Intermediate teacher needs thirty minutes, uninterrupted by visitor, secretary, or any other officer, to do acceptable work.

How shall this time be spent?

There is an impression in some quarters that in an organized class time should be allowed out of the half hour for reports of committees, for announcements, and for other items. This is an unfortunate practice. The best work of the teacher and the best interest of the pupils center in the Bible-teaching and Bible-studying period of the class. If five or ten minutes are subtracted from this brief period for miscellaneous items, the loss is great.

Usually some other time may be had for these very essential items of class organization. There should be gathering times other than on Sunday. Perhaps there should be some other time in the Sunday-school hour when these items can be attended to. If no other time can be provided and a part of the lesson time must be

sacrificed, this should probably never be more than five minutes.

Given the full thirty minutes, how may it be used to the maximum advantage?

The first five minutes of the lesson period constitute especially the fight for interest and attention. Hence the greatest of care should be taken in preparing for this first five minutes and in studying its whole effect. Here is the chance for your point of contact, the bridge between the interests uppermost as the pupils enter the class and the interest you wish to arouse in the lesson material.

The first five minutes must bring a fresh message week by week; no one should be able easily to guess how the teacher will begin the lesson to-day. There should be no uniformity. Elements of surprise should be constantly present.

How may the major portion of the half hour be used? By the teacher's doing all the talking? Once in a great while, yes. It is much easier for the average teacher to talk than to do the better thing; it is the line of least resistance.

But better ways there are. To secure an interchange of ideas in which the pupils participate is easily the best way of all. A debate may be started where the subject lends itself to that kind of treatment. A series of questions may be asked and the answers discussed as to their correctness or incorrectness. Questioning by the teacher which stimulates thought and does **not** embarrass is also wholesome.

Where several characters enter into a story it is possible for members of the class to impersonate these characters and carry on the dialogue. Where suitable pictures are available the lesson story may be developed by these.

Variety in the manner of conducting the class session is endless. But it costs time and thought to plan for this. The superficial teacher will never find the way into this field of successful effort. It is too costly.

How shall the lesson hour be brought to a close? Is this really important? Most assuredly it is. It is important enough to be planned with care. The obvious moral should never be emphasized. If the teaching point is not clear by indirection, a more direct statement will avail little. A prayer at the close may be the right way, but used frequently may not be so valuable. A question left unanswered except as it finds answer in the heart of the pupil is helpful. A story, the best one has by way of illustration, may offer a good way to close the period.

But what if one is surprised by the sounding of the closing signal and the lesson is still unfinished? The answer is simple: One should not be surprised. A watch or clock should be in sight of the teacher, but not of the pupils. If the teacher has occasion to look at the time, it should be in a manner which does not attract the attention of the pupils. It is true that lesson plans may have to be abandoned to some extent; occasionally the teacher is justified in abandoning the entire plan, when manifestly led by the Spirit so to do. If the pres-

entation must be cut to fit the time, it is usually better to do the cutting in the middle than at either end.

A few of the questions which teachers frequently ask concerning the lesson hour may be answered here:

1. How may attention be secured? Attention is based on interest. Interest may be aroused by the conviction and earnestness of the teacher, by a well-prepared lesson presentation, by alertness in the teaching act, by helpful variety, by good illustrations, by suitable questions, by application to immediate and daily situations and needs. Attention should be expected as a matter of course. It should not be necessary to ask for it; it is fatal to plead for it. "There can be no teaching without attention; there will be no attention without interest."

2. How may the restless and the ill-behaved boy or girl be dealt with? Restlessness may be an expression of motor activity suppressed; its relief comes from opening up channels of expression. To have something to do in this class may at times be as necessary as in the Junior grade. A pencil and a paper for each pupil, presented without notice and utilized in some directed way, may save the situation.

Ill-behavior may take the form of mischief. Mischief is misplaced energy. If the energy be directed, the solution is usually reached. But ill-behavior may be more serious than mischief. The remedy usually lies outside the class hour rather than in it. The easiest solution is to secure the pupils' interest in and affection for the teacher.

3. How may dull pupils be stimulated? Dullness may

frequently be the result of bad air in the classroom. It may be due to any one of many physical causes. Sometimes these may be removed; where this is not possible, the effort of the teacher to arouse interest must be greater than in other cases.

4. How may the overly alert pupil be suppressed? The teacher must be specific in asking questions, in singling out other pupils. The alert pupil may be given an occasional direct question, but seldom refer a question to him which has been left unanswered by another. A personal, friendly talk is sometimes necessary to get the pupil to see the necessity for repression.

5. How may irrelevant subjects, the athletic game, the social function, be kept out of the lesson hour? First, be sure that they should be kept out; better, perhaps, they should be brought in by the teacher, referred to, and then dismissed. But the introduction by the pupil of material foreign to the lesson subject should be discouraged; by common agreement the lesson hour should belong to the teacher. By equally common agreement, however, some other hour should belong to the pupils; the teacher should meet that issue fairly.

6. How may distractions be avoided during the lesson period? The secretary and other school officials should be rigidly excluded from the class. As far as possible distracting sounds should be shut out, as by a separate room; where this is not feasible, distracting sights may almost always be shut out by the exercise of a little ingenuity. Seating the pupils so that they will face the teacher and a blank wall back of him is one way. The

judicious use of inexpensive screens to shut out the sight of the rest of the school is another.

7. How may evident disrespect be treated? Many times in this period disrespect is simulated. It is not genuine. This type of disrespect thrives on attention; therefore it may be profitably disregarded in class, unless it is too pronounced. Out of class, the pupil will usually respond to a friendly appeal to be fair and respectful.

The lesson period is the golden opportunity. It is full of possibilities, of success or failure. And not all that seems to be so is really failure. Out of our seeming failures the One whom we serve frequently builds success. There is a place beyond which our responsibility does not go; but only our best endeavor, honestly invested, brings us to that place.

#### For Further Reading

GREGORY.—“Seven Laws of Teaching.”

ADAMS.—“A Primer on Teaching.”

#### Questions for Review

1. Why is it necessary that thirty minutes be allowed for uninterrupted lesson presentation and study?

2. Why is the battle for attention won or lost in the first five minutes?

3. Why should the first five minutes be varied in character from Sunday to Sunday?

4. What plan of lesson treatment is better than the “lecture” method, where the teacher does all the talking?

5. Suggest three ways in which a lesson treatment

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may be developed through the major portion of the period?

6. How would you help the teacher who is frequently surprised by the closing signal, and is not ready to close as had been planned?

7. How would you deal with restlessness? With downright misbehavior?

8. How far may subjects of general interest, such as athletics or social matters, be discussed in the class hour?

9. Suggest simple ways by which distractions may be avoided?

10. What is meant by simulated disrespect and how may it be dealt with?

## IX

### Between Sundays

So far the chapters of this book have placed main emphasis upon the teaching function of the Intermediate teacher. Let nothing be said that will minimize in any way the importance of that function; but let the emphasis now be laid upon what the great Sunday-school leader, Dr. H. Clay Trumbull, called the "other work of the Sunday-school teacher."

Counted by hours and minutes nearly seven whole days pass by between the close of the Sunday school on one Sunday and its opening on the next. Counted by possibilities for influence of life, decades elapse. Pity the teacher whose conception of his task carries with it no vision of the immensity of his responsibility in the time between Sundays!

In this connection we have only to consider the teacher in relation to the class as a group. How may the teacher function here? As to individual contacts we shall see later.

As a basis there is the class organization. This implies class officers, class committees, usually a class name and objective, and it ought to imply also class meetings and other events entirely apart from the Sunday hour.



Officers in these groups should be elected for six months in preference to a year. Some have found it desirable to change every three months, for obvious reasons. Most committees should serve for three months only.

Committees should be of two kinds, one group promoting affairs within the class with class interests as a goal, and the other group promoting affairs for the sake of others, with a missionary goal. The organized class frequently fails for lack of this latter type of committee.

Class meetings should be held at least once a month, or better, usually, twice a month. If the program of the group is ample and active, once a week may be desirable. With a scheduled meeting once a month, and on special occasions when desirable, the program is frequently quite sufficient.

Class meetings may provide for some business; too much business kills the meeting plan. What business is transacted should be carried out in an orderly manner. This is a good opportunity to acquaint the pupils with parliamentary usage.

Class meetings may be varied by social activities, by debates and literary affairs suited to the age, by outings in season, by visits to great centers of art and manufacture, by concerted acts of service and helpfulness, and by endless other lines of activity.

This is the age of natural grouping. If the teacher is near enough to the group he or she may have the privilege of discovering the springs of interest which animate the group and find natural and spontaneous

expression. These interests will usually be neither wholly good nor wholly bad. They are interests, and their goodness or lack of goodness is not the factor which determines their selection by these boys and girls.

Shall the teacher displace these interests with new ones of adult coining? Possibly that may be desirable and even necessary. But happy that teacher who is keen to discover the ever-changing interests of pupils of this age and to utilize that which is best in these interests, aiding the development, sharing the enthusiasm, but at the same time quietly eliminating that which is not wholesome.

Soon, very soon for some, these same pupils will have to make choices apart from the teacher's influence. Will the pupils learn how to choose, or merely how to discover what the teacher chooses?

The teacher, therefore, faces the opportunity of being the leader of the group, in the background, perhaps, but the leader nevertheless. It will take time, no doubt, but it will be time well spent.

To summarize: The class should be organized; the officers and personnel of the committees should be changed frequently and, perhaps, committees may well be kept for a time and then dropped, or carried under different names; the class should have a program, for its own upbuilding and for the help of others. The teacher should dedicate time between Sundays to this task. The teacher who says that one does not have time to do this fails to meet the needs of the pupils at this point.

**For Further Reading**

- CHESLEY.—“Social Activities for Men and Boys.”  
Official Handbook of the Girls' Branch of the Public  
School Athletic League, New York City.  
Manual of the Woodcraft League for Girls.  
Manual of the Camp Fire Girls.  
Secondary Division, Leaflet No. 4, issued by the  
International Sunday School Association.

**Questions for Review**

1. What measure of responsibility should a teacher feel for the time which elapses between class sessions? Why?
2. What is implied by class organization?
3. Why should officers be elected for a short term of service?
4. Distinguish between the two main groups of class committees.
5. Suggest six committees that might be organized for a class of boys or girls and briefly define their functions.
6. Outline a suggestive program for a class meeting.
7. How may the teacher help the pupil to learn to make wise choices?
8. What is meant by being a leader in the background?
9. Are so-called natural interests of boys and girls selected by them because the interests are either good or bad, or for other reasons?
10. How may a teacher eliminate hurtful interests from the pupil's life?

## The Personal Touch

Does the teacher think of the class as a group or as individuals which make up a group? Is there a significant difference? Most assuredly.

More often than is generally understood the chief element of a teacher's failure lies in the inability to discover that the work must be primarily individual; the mass or the group features will then lend themselves to the success of the general plan.

This helps to answer the question, How many pupils may a teacher have in a class if successful work is to be done? As many as a teacher can pastor, which means, simply, as many as one can touch helpfully as individuals. A certain amount of shepherding may be done of the flock as a whole; but the good shepherd has best been described as one who can look after the one sheep.

The teacher who has been thinking of the class as a whole will make important discoveries when each of the six or eight pupils is looked upon as a separate entity, a distinct problem for solution. The pupil's life is almost certainly closed to the teacher's approach until the relationship has been individualized. Then the life is opened up; the needs, the fears, the hopes are discovered, and the place where the teacher can enter in most helpfully is made clear.

Whatever, then, may be the teacher's investment in the class as a whole, there still remains the call for personal contact with the individual pupil. How may this be secured? There are many ways, but there is one factor common to all—time. How much time it does take, and yet what wonderfully rich dividends the investment pays!

1. The school life or the work life of the pupil is one of the possible points of contact. This is a main factor in the life of the pupil; how may the teacher be helpfully related to the whole life of the pupil without being specially related to this important phase?

If the pupil is in school, in what grade? What studies are being taken? Who is the teacher—some one I know or could know with little effort? What studies are popular, what disliked? Are some unpopular because they are difficult? Perhaps the difficult study is one in which the Sunday-school teacher could give real help.

Is the progress in school such as will encourage the pupil to remain as long as possible, or is the breaking point near? If the Sunday-school teacher is near enough to his boy at the time when the desire comes to leave school, he may save him from what in many cases is a fatal mistake.

Is the boy at work? Where, and under what surroundings? Is he in a place where promotion is probable, or is he in a "blind-alley" job? Is he preparing himself for promotion, or is he just drifting?

If the pupil is a girl, what more important item of information can the woman teacher have than the condi-

tions under which that girl is at work? How many tragedies of girlhood might be averted if the teacher, who is frequently nearer to the girl than her parents, would make sure of the conditions which surround the daily life work of her girls?

2. The leisure-time problem in the lives of boys and girls is a tremendous one. Here the personal touch of the Sunday-school teacher is all-important.

Who are the boy's friends? Frequently to know his friends is the shortest cut to knowing the boy himself. But to know the boy's friends one must be close to the boy, and prove one's right to be let into his close personal relationships.

The visit of the teacher to the boy's home is one definite step toward individual contact. Of that the next chapter will treat.

The visit of the pupil to the teacher's home may be helpful. Here many elements enter in. A vigorous boy of fifteen may not be very keen to visit the home of a woman teacher unless accompanied by other boys of the class. Yet a good deal will depend on the impression that teacher has made upon him, upon the reports he may have heard from other boys who may have been there; and perhaps the way may be opened up by a previous visit of the class as a whole.

If the man teacher of a boys' class has made an impression, and if the way is open for fellowship, every boy in the class will probably be eager to accept the invitation to spend an evening at the teacher's home, especially if the teacher has learned the art of making

his home attractive to boys. The same is true of the woman teacher of girls.

The influence of this visit to the teacher's home is not always estimated at its right value. If the pupils of our classes all came from helpful homes, the teacher might not always be able to make so definite a contribution. But what of the homes of indifference, or of need? What of the houses which are falsely called homes, some places of poverty and some places of great wealth? Suppose the boy in my class comes from such a place of abode, and I can have the privilege of introducing him to a home where Christian love reigns, and where the home fires burn brightly. Who shall say whether my teaching on Sundays or the occasional evening at my home will accomplish most in that boy's life?

Not every teacher has this as an asset in his or her work. But there still remain various opportunities for individual social contact. In season, there is the walk together, or the boat ride, or the skating event. There is the concert or other function, the educational or other lecture, the visit to some place of interest. There are so many opportunities for this contact with the one boy or girl, apart from the class, that one need not seriously lack "things to do." Rather must we cultivate the will to do this kind of thing.

It may take a great deal of personal, individual cultivation of this kind before the confidences of the pupil's life may be given to the teacher. But when they are so given, the teacher enters into a new relationship with

that pupil, and the teaching hour on Sunday may be multiplied many times in its significance.

The unruly pupil, the careless boy or girl, may not usually be corrected on Sunday with any assurance of permanent improvement; but the unruly or careless pupil may be won in a single evening's investment of the teacher's time during the week.

During this period momentous questions should arise which the teacher will want to discuss with the pupil. Among these will usually be the question of personal decision for Christ. The teacher may meet the pupil faithfully on Sunday through months and years and yet feel hesitant to approach this phase of a teacher's work and privilege; but a few personal contacts now and then, an evening or an afternoon rightly utilized, may open the whole life to the challenge of Christian service and change the course of that life.

3. The personal letter offers unusual opportunity for the individual touch. But again it depends on the kind of personal letter. It should be a message that will be heartily welcome; if it is sentimental, or too long, or of a complaining nature, it may not be eagerly received. Such a letter should not embarrass the pupil if read by the members of the family. This point should be carefully considered. It so happens that many a pupil has no regular correspondents; may never have had a letter in his own name from some one outside the family circle. To such a pupil the teacher's letter may come as a delightful surprise and may be an epochal event in his life.



The personal letter is a special opportunity when teacher and pupil are separated by absence of either from home. To know that, whatever the distance, the teacher remembers him is a matter of great delight to the boy. It will make an indelible impression upon him. If the letter bears the right message, it may mark a distinct turning point in his life. Perhaps it is unnecessary to say that a personal message should never be sent upon a post card; the function of such a card ceases with the purely impersonal message.

The birthday is still another occasion for the personal remembrance; it may be a letter, a special occasion which teacher and pupil may enjoy together, even a telephone call. To establish the precedent of sending a gift on the occasion of the birthday may not be wholly wise; if this plan of recognition is used at all, the present should be of minimum cost. Other anniversary occasions, like the date of joining the Church, may be remembered in like manner.

The principle which is involved in all this is a simple but important one. The teacher should be alert to discover every opportunity which is offered to cement the bonds of personal friendship between teacher and pupil. Enough occasions occur in each life to give every possible opportunity for the exhibition of sincere personal friendship.

#### **Questions for Review**

1. What is the difference between thinking of pupils as a group or as individuals who make up a group?
2. What is one test for the proper size of a class?

3. How does the individualizing of the pupils help the teacher to enter their lives?

4. What items of information should a teacher have at hand with reference to a schoolboy or schoolgirl? A boy or girl at work?

5. Make a list of items of important information about a pupil in regard to leisure time.

6. How may the teacher's home function as a factor of influence?

7. In what ways may a teacher who is boarding, or living in a home not open to her pupils, secure equivalent opportunities for helpfulness?

8. What are the possibilities for help or hindrance in the personal letter?

9. How may the pupil's birthday be wisely recognized?

10. What is the underlying principle in the matter of personal contacts?

## Home Contacts

The Sunday-school teacher is all too frequently neglectful of the home as a factor in the process of character-building. If the home has in it the possibilities of coöperation with the teacher, the loss in failing to secure that coöperation is serious. If, on the other hand, the home is utterly lacking in elements of coöperation, the teacher should know that fact. But it might be well to pause before pronouncing any home hopeless in this regard.

First, then, comes the necessity for knowing the home. How teachers can go about their work month after month without even visiting the homes of their pupils is a matter of constant astonishment. How can a teacher know the pupil without knowing something of the home life?

As quickly as possible after the pupil has been entered on the class roll a call should be made at the pupil's home. This may be a very brief call, simply for purposes of getting acquainted. Care should be taken that few questions are asked by the teacher, lest the reputation of being unduly inquisitive, however unjust, should be earned. This first visit may reveal a good deal about the home life, or may reveal little. It is but a start.

The first time a pupil is absent from class gives an-

other excellent excuse, if one be needed, for calling at the home. The absent pupil is the teacher's opportunity.

Should the pupil be reported as ill, there comes another fine opportunity for visiting the home. Here again due tact should be shown. If the child is confined to the bed, only the most urgent invitation from the parents should justify a visit to the sick room, and then the call should be exceedingly brief. A birthday anniversary or any other event may furnish still another occasion for a home visit. The sickness of a parent, or any great loss which has come to the family, or any great joy, should help to make occasion for the teacher's call.

But not only these special occasions should make possible the visit of the teacher to the home. That should be a matter of course, at regular intervals, the length of these intervals depending upon the time the teacher can spare for this phase of the work and also upon other factors.

The teacher will not always be a welcome visitor to the home; that fact should be squarely faced. At times the fault for this condition may rest with the teacher who may have an unfortunate personality; or a previous visit may not have left a good impression. On the other hand, there may be genuine lack of cordiality on the part of the home people, though, fortunately, this is rare. Such an attitude does not justify a refusal to continue to visit the home. It is a great privilege to overcome the obstacle thus presented and to win the whole family, perchance, to friendship.

Many a home is utterly without the winsomeness and light of the genuine Christian message. The members of the family, aside from the children who come irregularly to Sunday school, seldom hear any reference to the essentials which the boy or the girl hear emphasized from Sunday to Sunday. These may be homes of poverty or homes of wealth; Christ is frequently refused entrance to both.

“But it takes so much time to visit,” says many a teacher. How may time be better spent? Suppose that the indifference of a parent may be overcome, and the attitude changed to one of responsiveness to the needs of the religious life of the boy or girl, what better contribution to the pupil’s life can be made?

It is well to remember that unless the parent is far from normal there is one common ground on which that parent and the teacher can agree, namely, the best for the child of the home. Here are the heart interests which blend. Here, too, not infrequently are heartaches that seek expression. The childhood life of father or mother, spent in a Christian home, is often happily recalled as the teacher from the Sunday school shows an intense and genuine personal interest in the life of the son or daughter of the home.

But this interest must be genuine, not sham, not professional. The progress of the boy or girl in school or at work, the welfare of other members of the family, the manifest interests of the boy or the girl, all these and more are vital topics of mutual concern.

There will be embarrassments, almost tragic at times.

Despite one's care to call only at the seasonable hour there will be times when the visitor will come to the home "just at the wrong time." Exquisite tact will be needed to remove all elements of embarrassment. What, for instance, is more tragic than when the teacher comes to a home to find there a drunken father!

The teacher of a class of boys who visited the place one boy called home, squalid quarters back of a cheap cigar store, with unwashed youngsters, a father in his cups, and a mother desperate in her despair, found it no easy place to go frequently. But he went. And each time he was many times repaid by the light of appreciation that came into the boy's eyes. This teacher brought to that home of dire need the only bit of sunshine and good cheer that came that way. Great was that teacher's privilege!

Aside from the teacher's personal contact with the home itself, there is the constant opportunity at every point to exalt the home in the thought of the pupils of the class. The strain between home and boy occurs all too often in this period of life. Whether or not it shall increase to the breaking point may be partly decided by the attitude of a teacher whose influence is pronounced. With the girl the difficulty may not be quite so acute in its manifestations, but the condition may be serious indeed.

What a privilege, under these circumstances, to exalt the home, to help honor the father and the mother and remove misunderstandings between brothers and sisters, and by tactful means to strengthen the home influence!

Have we as teachers been negligent in this regard? Have we underestimated the place of influence which the home occupies? Have we tried to substitute our influence for the influence of father and mother, or have we been satisfied if the Sunday school relieved the home of some of its duties and substituted for it in part?

We need to come back to an appreciation of the place which God has given the home in the social framework. Commercialized amusement has made a mighty assault on the modern home. Shall we thoughtlessly be allies of this new and mighty enemy and be content to let our work, done with the best of motives, rob the home of its few remaining prerogatives?

A word should be said about the Christian home. Here may be found parents who desire for their boys and girls the same things the teacher most desires. They will often be ready to coöperate to the greatest possible extent in bringing about the best achievements for the pupils in the class.

In the light of all this let the teacher be on friendly terms with the home, an acceptable counselor, a welcome visitor, a helpful ally, in the accomplishment of the best that is possible in the life of the boy and the girl.

#### For Further Reading

FORBUSH.—“The Boy Problem in the Home.”

McKEEVER.—“Farm Boys and Girls.”

FISKE.—“Boy Life and Self-Government.” See especially Ch. XIV. Suggestive also for leaders of girls.

**Questions for Review**

1. How would you classify homes in regard to their coöperation with the Sunday-school teacher?
2. Why is it desirable for a teacher to visit a pupil's home?
3. Under what circumstances may a teacher's visit to a home be unwelcome?
4. What ways would you suggest for a teacher to overcome a lack of cordiality?
5. What common ground of interest may parent and teacher usually find?
6. What is meant by the "strain between the home and the boy"?
7. How may a teacher exalt the home in the eyes of the pupil?
8. Is a teacher justified in disagreeing with the ideas of a parent as expressed by a pupil?
9. What influence has commercialized amusement on the home?
10. How may the Christian home become an ally of the teacher?



## Decision for Christ

When the caption of this chapter appears there are many who will be ready at once to grant that this is the most important consideration in the whole book. Let us, then, at once differ with this thought. As a step it is vital; as an end it is a calamity.

These are strong words. But the Church to-day is full of people who, through no fault of their own, were led to make the declaration for Christ as a final step in their Christian lives. Its finality is attested by the fact that they have done nothing since.

Let us, then, remember that this chapter is not complete in itself; that the next chapter is essential to a vital understanding of this. But let us not forget that a decision for Christ is vital as a step.

But what is decision for Christ? We must not grow confused with theological terms which may be possible of more than one interpretation.

There can be little improvement on Gilkey's reference to the "inherited creed" and the "personal creed." Given a boy or girl raised in a Christian family, there may be no recollection of any time when such a child was anything but a Christian. Yet there must of necessity come a time when, with emergence into manhood or womanhood, this allegiance to Christ becomes a

personal matter. That which has been transmitted through the parents will no longer suffice. The declaration of this personal allegiance may be called by any term which is most acceptable. As a step, it is exceedingly important.

The Intermediate period is the golden harvest time for this expression. Never before this time have pupils been so ready to respond to the right appeal; never again, after they leave this department, will they be so ready. The highest curve of response is about on the border line between the Intermediate and the Senior departments (new grading).

What does this mean?

Clearly that the Intermediate teacher who fails to secure the personal declaration for Christ before the pupil passes on to the next grade may, by the testimony of all the best statistical material we now have, reduce the probability for such decision by fifty per cent.

The declaration of such personal allegiance to Christ should have a public element in it, whatever may be the close personal work of the teacher in helping to form the decision. Hence the accepted Church forms which provide for the public declaration in some form are of great value.

In these days of great gatherings of older boys and girls in two-day and three-day conferences the opportunity for public declaration is almost always given. To the Sunday-school teacher who for years has honestly labored to bring the boy or girl into right relationship with Christ it may seem that some one else

has reaped the reward. This feeling may not properly be condemned as selfish. The earnest teacher is entitled to the joy of seeing a pupil won to Christ. But the second thought will always convince such a teacher that the time and place may have been specially suitable to challenge the boy or girl to this declaration; and such a teacher will surely rejoice in the result achieved and set himself to the greater task which lies beyond.

Shall there be a public decision day or acknowledgment day in the Sunday school? Unless the Church makes provision for a like expression in some other definite way, such a special day would seem to be most desirable. But such a day, as it is sometimes conducted, is of doubtful value; there is no preparation on the part of the teachers, no previous challenge to the pupils, no plan beyond urging a large number of pupils to declare themselves in some superficial way.

A decision day or other form of opportunity to declare allegiance to Christ should be preceded by at least three months of careful and prayerful planning on the part of teachers. Better still if the preparation for such a day next year begin immediately at the close of the day this year. To select as decision day some Sunday which is not, in the eyes of some, well provided for, as in more than one known instance, taking "Review Sunday" in the Uniform Lesson plan for a decision day "because the teachers find the review so difficult"—what need be said of such tactics as that?

What, again, can be said in justification of a school which allows year after year to pass without giving

any public opportunity for boys and girls in this eager age to enlist openly in the cause of Christ? There are such schools.

Sometimes an opportunity to declare oneself as a Christian may be given in class; it should, however, be followed by some public declaration before the whole school or before the Church. There should be no easy course in this matter. Normal boys and girls of this age are not seeking easy ways to do real things; we should not violate their own convictions by offering anything less than the heroic.

Decision for Christ should be based on intelligent conception rather than upon an emotional appeal. Not that it should be an intellectual appeal devoid of the emotional, but certainly the emotional should not predominate. A skillful speaker, utilizing the emotional element, can sweep an entire group of Intermediate pupils through the whole gamut of expression. Surely no one should mistake this for decision and declaration in a matter so vital as the Christian life. The Sunday-school teacher, the superintendent, and the pastor should unite to protect these boys and girls against appeals for decision where the emotional element is dominant. It is a duty which they owe to the young folks under their care. But by the same obligation there should be full and free opportunity for the wholesome appeal and the deliberate decision and declaration.

As a method, the plan of the "Forward Step" card is commended for at least occasional use. The claims of Christ and his Church are forcefully presented and

then everyone in the room, teacher or other adult as well as pupil, receives a card headed "My Forward Step." The suggestion is then made that everyone present might take a forward step in the Christian life. For the one who has never made such a declaration it would naturally be "to accept Christ." For the Christian who is not a member of the Church, such a step is clearly suggested. But for every other there is some step forward. Needless to say, this appeal should not be made below the Intermediate grade.

The value of this or of any other method will depend very largely upon the means used to follow up the decision so reached. Here the responsibility rests upon parent, upon teacher, upon officer, upon pastor. Guilty the official who lets this work slack! How much damage has been done by stimulating the will to the point of vital action and then providing no channel for expression only the records of heaven can tell!

#### For Further Reading

MCKINLEY.—"Educational Evangelism."

FARIS.—"The Sunday School at Work." Ch. XV.

#### Questions for Review

1. What is meant by decision for Christ?
2. Why is the decision for Christ not the most important end of a teacher's effort?
3. Define the difference between a personal creed and an inherited creed?
4. Why does the Intermediate period offer unusual opportunities for winning to Christian decision?

5. Why should such a declaration have a public element in it?

6. What should be the teacher's attitude toward other agencies that help to win pupils to Christ, and under whose auspices the actual step may be taken?

7. By what means may a decision day be made most valuable in the Sunday school?

8. How far should emotional appeal have a place in this group?

9. What is meant by the "Forward Step" card?

10. What care is necessary in following up decisions?

### XIII

## Church Membership: Nominal or Real?

In the last chapter it was said that decision for Christ is not an end in itself. Here may it likewise be said that Church membership is not an end in itself. Why should these two statements be made? The answer is found in the attitude of many people toward these two events in the life of a boy or a girl.

Emphasis is rightly placed upon the significance of the definite Christian decision; the previous chapter bears testimony to the importance of this step. A like degree of emphasis should be laid upon the act of connecting oneself with the Church; this is also a step of utmost importance. But both of these steps fall short of their promised fulfillment when the Church members thus secured are not superior to the great masses of Church members whose names are now on the rolls.

Any challenge to Christian decision and Church membership which does not carry as a part of its message the continuous program of conviction and service throughout the Church life is faulty. Every Church which is content to receive into its membership scores and hundreds of young people of the Intermediate age without providing a program whereby their religious belief and life may express itself is sowing seed for a

harvest of church sponges of the most absorbent variety, or is opening the door for easy egress from the Church of those who are now being received.

Shall these boys and girls, then, come into **real** or **nominal** Church relationship? At this particular age the question will be answered by the extent to which they find something real to do in the Church. Adults who can remember their own early years in the Church will recall that the boys and girls who continued in the Church membership, and who are active to-day, in very large measure found work in the program of the Church very quickly after they entered. Those who did not—where are they?

What kind of Church membership does your church provide for these young people—nominal or real? Should not this matter be clearly defined before the next group of young people come into the membership? Upon the Intermediate teachers and the officers of the Sunday school, in conference with the pastor, should rest a large responsibility to see to it that the young people of this age who join the Church find avenues for the expression of their new declaration of loyalty.

The organized class should be one medium through which service may be rendered. Here again may be emphasized the necessity that each class have a dual program, providing in part for its own growth and increasing interest and in part for the welfare of others.

The teaching of world citizenship, with all its phases of missionary effort, is another channel through which the religious life may find expression. The obligation of



every Christian life to consider Christian callings as a life work should be emphasized.

Committee service in the Sunday school is only rarely offered to boys and girls. With an adult adviser such a committee may carry the whole burden of a special occasion. Such committee service should be for special events, so that the committee may organize, do its work, and disband, so that its units may form into other committees, all in a short space of time.

Service asked of these boys and girls should be dignified and yet not adult. To ask them to do things which an eight-year-old child can do is certainly not wise; to put upon them adult tasks without adult leadership is certain to bring disappointment.

To those who have not fully trusted these young people with the responsibilities of real service, but who can give this plan a trial, will come many delightful surprises. The willingness to assume special work and the ability to do it are latent in many a life and need only to be called forth.

Where the Young People's Society and the Sunday school are rightly related there should be a helpful interchange of expression between the two. The pupils of the Sunday school will frequently find in wisely conducted young people's meetings the best of opportunity for the development of the spiritual side of life and for certain types of needed expression; the young people who are active in their own organization should find in the Sunday school a most fruitful field for enlisting their lives in actual service.

The period immediately following the coming into Church membership will probably be a time of real testing. In the pupil's mind will linger the emphasis which has been put upon this step by so many people and in so many ways. The teacher may have urged the pupil to join the Church, the pastor has emphasized it in the pulpit, even the parent may have dealt with it in the home. Now that it is an accomplished fact, what next? In many a youthful mind this question lurks.

What next? This is the ringing challenge to the Church. In the week and the month following the admission service will it all be forgotten by the responsible leaders of the Church, and remembered only by the boy or girl so much concerned?

Two boys join the Church to-day. What next? The church official body may well afford to meet to-morrow and spend the whole evening in finding work for those two boys. When officials of the Church thus meet their obligations, the era of Church members who only get and never give will gradually pass away.

#### **For Further Reading**

Secondary Division, Leaflet No. 4, issued by the International Sunday School Association.

HOBEN.—“The Minister and the Boy.”

#### **Questions for Review**

1. Why is not Church membership an end in itself?
2. What challenge should the joining of the Church carry with it?
3. What kind of results are likely to be secured when

Church membership is not accompanied by a program of expression?

4. What is the difference, in your mind, between real and nominal Church membership?

5. What is the value of the teaching of world citizenship?

6. Suggest three lines of committee service in the Sunday school for Intermediate pupils.

7. Between what two extremes must service requested of Intermediates safely steer?

8. How may the Sunday school and the Young People's Society be linked together?

9. Why is the period immediately following the Church-joining a real test?

10. If an Intermediate boy or girl should join your Church next Sunday, what program of service would you suggest?

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## XIV

### Becoming Seniors

After the fifteenth birthday comes a transition. Perhaps the Intermediate teacher will go with these pupils into the Senior Department; or the teacher may remain behind while the pupils pass on. Whatever course the teacher takes, the pupils must be advanced. It is the law of life. Nothing will more quickly cause lack of interest than failure to progress.

There is great significance in the time of life chosen for this next step. The important change incident to the passing of puberty, in the average case, will be just a little before this promotion. New impulses are manifest, new aspects of life present themselves. It is fitting that the pupil should take a definite step forward in his Sunday-school relationship.

But what shall the pupil bring to this transition time to take over into the new period? Is he prepared for the promotion? There are several ways in which his preparation may be tested.

1. What Biblical knowledge has he acquired? If he has been in the Intermediate Department three years, this contact should surely have brought to him an increased understanding of the Bible content.

2. What momentous questions of life have been fairly met and answered as fully as he can answer them at this

time? His attitude toward things spiritual, toward the qualities of truthfulness and honesty, his appreciation of his relation to others and his obligation to render service beyond his own interests, his habits of thought and life—all these might well be looked over in the stock-taking, for three years of the right kind of contact in the department he is just leaving should have marked his life deeply and helpfully.

The above questions may take simple form and recast themselves into two others: What does he know? What is he? If teaching is "causing another to know," then the Bible-teaching of which we write should be "causing another to know, to be, and to do." How does this Intermediate pupil, just ready to pass over into the Senior grade, measure up to this test?

Should any exercises mark the passage from Intermediate to Senior? Preferably, yes; there may be justifiable exceptions, but the general plan should be to mark the transition as others are properly marked. Perhaps there is an added reason here for special recognition.

Every emphasis that can be given now to the thought of continuance in the Sunday school should be brought to bear. There should not be the suggestion of being graduated from a lower grade, but of being graduated to a higher one. Some little stress may be placed upon what has been accomplished; much more should be placed on the attractiveness of what is ahead.

At this point the general Sunday-school program should function. All the brain and energy which can be

summoned to the task should be invested. The Senior years, fifteen to eighteen, are the trying years. New interests enter more definitely here. The pull away is strong; shall the pull toward the school be greater?

Every impact upon the life should be made to count. A strong teacher, a live class organization, an active and aggressive Sunday school, a lesson period that gets hold of the life, public exercises of the school which are interesting and stimulating and not formulated with the nine-year-old pupil primarily in mind, challenging tasks, within the Church and without the Church, all related to the bringing in of the Kingdom of God in its broadest conception: these are safeguards against that time when other interests will pull strongly away from the Sunday school.

It is well to remember that at this very age when the Sunday school loses so many boys it is equally true that the public school loses great numbers; in less degree this is so also with girls. In like measure the home loses many boys and girls at this period; more often it is not the loss of the child from the home but the loss of sympathetic touch between parent and child. These facts should be taken into consideration as the teacher faces the fact of loss from the Sunday school at this period. Evidently there is an inherent quality of life which at this stage tends to break relations with institutions which have so far functioned largely.

This realization should come as a mighty incentive to the earnest teacher to meet the situation successfully, master it, and win. If the boy is eager to leave school,

whether he actually does so or not, if he betrays restlessness as to home relationships, surely there is additional reason why the Sunday school should hold him in steady contact. Never did he need all that the Sunday school stands for more than he needs it now.

It is true that the loss of boys and girls from the church school is greater in the years just ahead, in the Senior grade rather than in the Intermediate. But the loss in the Senior grade may be largely forestalled if the work and influence of the Intermediate grade are what they ought to be. It will not do, therefore, to be content with transferring this boy or girl to the Senior Department; the question as to the efficiency of work so far done may not be rightly measured for one or two or possibly three years.

All honor to the Intermediate teacher who senses his responsibility at this critical period of life, this in-between age, this bridge-crossing time! His shall be the joy if these pupils hold steady and are still found under the benign influence of the Church in later years.

#### **Questions for Review**

1. Why is advancement a law of life?
2. What special significance attaches to the time of life at which the transfer to the Senior Department is usually made?
3. How would you test the Biblical knowledge a pupil has secured?
4. Suggest three great life questions that may have been pretty definitely decided by this time.
5. What kind of public exercises would be appropriate to promotion?

6. How is the Sunday school tested at this point?
7. Why should the Sunday school as a whole function largely in the pupil's life just now?
8. What methods would you use to hold the pupil to the Sunday school at this breaking-away time?
9. Why is the loss in the Senior grade largely chargeable to Intermediate grade failures?
10. Why is the Intermediate period called the "bridge-crossing" time of life?

#### Additional Reading

FOSTER.—"Starting to Teach." Six chapters on the study of boy life, and six chapters on teaching boys in Bible study.

FOSTER.—"The Boy and the Church." Ways in which the Church can function through the home, the school, and the boy's own interests.

CROW.—"The American Country Girl." Contains many letters from girls and a valuable bibliography.

SLATTERY.—"The Girl and Her Religion." For both girls and leaders of girls.

WEAVER.—"Profitable Vocations for Boys."

WEAVER.—"Vocations for Girls." These books will be of great value in helping these young people to find an answer to the question, "What Shall I Do?"







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